United Nations A/61/734–S/2007/69

General Assembly
Security Council

Distr.: General
8 February 2007

Original: English

General Assembly
Sixty-first session
Agenda item 13
The situation in the Middle East

Security Council
Sixty-second year

Identical letters dated 8 February 2007 from the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

I write to inform you and express my concern regarding an incident that took place yesterday, Wednesday, 7 February 2007, along the northern border.

Yesterday, while clearing mines in a salient inside Israeli territory, north of the border fence but south of the Blue Line, Israeli soldiers were fired on by the Lebanese Army. In response, the Israel Defense Forces returned fire.

It should be underscored that the IDF was operating in sovereign Israeli territory. Additionally, the IDF was conducting a legitimate operation to remove mines and other explosive devices in the area. I refer you to the incident which took place earlier this week, on 5 February 2007, where Israeli soldiers discovered a cluster of explosive devices in close proximity to the Blue Line.

The IDF had also informed the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon well in advance of its intent to operate in this area, and asked that the information be shared with the Lebanese Army. The Lebanese Army's firing at IDF soldiers is a violation of Israeli sovereignty and endangerment of their lives. Israel returned fire only after repeated Lebanese fire came dangerously close to the Israeli soldiers, who were, as stated, in Israeli territory. As such, returning the fire was entirely legitimate and in self-defence.

I assure you that Israel obviously does not seek an escalation on the border, but will work to secure and remove threats such as landmines, and certainly defend itself when attacked. Israel intends to continue to operate within the political and regulatory framework established in recent months.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the present letter circulated as a document of the sixty-first session of the General Assembly under agenda item 13. An identical letter has been sent to H.E. Mr. Peter Burian, President of the Security Council

(*Signed*) Dan **Gillerman**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

07-23282 (E) 080207